



Ethics Gram

February 2016

*US Army Space and Missile Defense Command/Army Forces Strategic Command
(USASMDC/ARSTRAT)*



Prohibited "Political Activity" in a Federal Workplace includes:

- Distributing campaign materials or items.
- Wearing partisan political buttons, t-shirts or other items.
- Displaying campaign materials or items.
- Performing campaign-related chores.
- Making political contributions to a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or a partisan political group.
- Posting a comment to a blog or social media that advocates for or against a political party, candidate, or political group.
- Using a government e-mail account to send content that advocates for or against a political party, candidate, or group.

The Hatch Act

Civilian Employees' Participation in Political Activities

As we are entering the primary election season leading to the elections in November, it is prudent for us to remind civilian employees of the limitations The Hatch Act (Act), 5 U.S.C §§ 7321-7326, places on the extent and nature of federal employees' participation in political activities. Although the Hatch Act allows most federal employees to participate in some types of "political activity," the Act prohibits political activity by Federal civilian employees while on duty, while wearing an official uniform or insignia (lapel pin), using a government vehicle, and in any Federal workplace. A "Federal workplace" is any federally owned or leased space in which federal employees perform official duties on a regular basis. This includes cafeterias and clubs. Employees may work on a partisan political campaign for any candidate while off duty, but cannot solicit, accept, or receive political contributions at any time even when off duty and away from the workplace. The Hatch Act is enforced by the Office of Special Counsel (OSC). Penalties for violations can be severe and can include removal for a first offense. The Hatch Act does not apply to active duty members of the Armed Forces, as they are subject to DoD Directive 1344.10 and AR 600-20. It is also important to note that SES employees have additional restrictions. You can find additional information at: <https://osc.gov/Pages/hatchact-affectsme.aspx>

Employees May:

- May be candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections
- Register and vote as you choose
- Assist in voter registration drives
- Express opinions about candidates and issues
- Contribute money to political organizations
- Attend political fundraising functions
- Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings, only if not on duty
- Be an active member of a political party or club
- Campaign for or against candidates, a referendum question or municipal ordinances
- Display bumper stickers on POVs
- Place a campaign sign in your front yard
- Distribute information at polling sites on Election Day, only if not on duty

Employees May NOT:

- Be candidates for public office in partisan political elections.
- Invite subordinates to political events
- Display in the workplace pictures of candidates for partisan political office
- Display photographs of candidates at an election campaign or political event
- Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election
- Solicit, accept or receive political contributions
- Wear partisan political buttons on duty
- Engage in political activity while:
 - on duty
 - in a government office
 - wearing an official uniform or insignia
 - using a government vehicle

If you have any questions, contact your Ethics Counselor
Huntsville – (256) 955-2181; Colorado Springs (719) 554-2126